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## **V CORPS SIGNAL SOLDIERS TRAIN TO 'OWN THE NIGHT'**

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**GRAFENWOEHR TRAINING AREA, Germany** — One hour past midnight and bedtime was nowhere in sight. But the Soldiers of V Corps' 578th Signal Company remained alert as their safety coach explained how to drive without headlights in the middle of the night.

In less than five hours those Soldiers had to be ready to conduct their morning exercise drills. Staff Sgt. Anthony Vasquez, NCO in charge of the training, explained safety procedures as the troops readied themselves for their first night vision goggle driving course.

"The main intent behind this training is to make sure these guys are confident [driving with night vision goggles]," said Vasquez. "Reading about it isn't enough. They have to see it. If they can trust themselves and the Soldier in front of them, then they'll be prepared to get the real thing done down the road."

This NVG training is part of a two-week team certification program, made up of both Soldier and signal tasks, that ensures that 578th Signal Company Soldiers are qualified to do their jobs "downrange" when they deploy. "Once we complete the

training, we will be officially Army qualified to run tropo [tropospheric scatter signal tasks] down in Iraq. We're training now, so that we'll be efficient on the job once we're downrange," said Pfc. Eric Perkins of the 578th.

In addition to being one of the most popular exercises of the program, the Soldiers apparently think that it is one of the most useful. "If they can't see us, they can't shoot us," said Perkins. "We could have our lives on the line soon, and it's good to know that we've been given the best training possible."

"Once we're downrange, let's say that we're in the middle of something and we have to go to blackout. These guys will be on point. They've had the classes; they know what to look for. Also, if they're ever in NTC [National Training Center], they can pass the training to their Soldiers down the road. It's just passing down the knowledge. That's what it's all about," added Vasquez.

